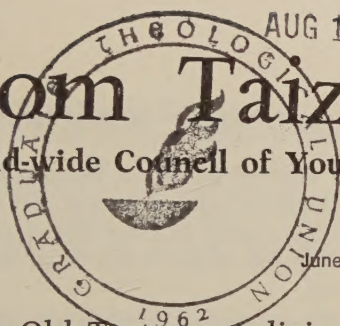


Letter from Taizé

Preparing for the world-wide Council of Youth



An old woman, in the Old Testament, living in a village of Sarepta, one day sees Elijah — the man of God — enter her home during a period of intense famine. She has scarcely any flour or oil in her jars. Yet she does not hesitate to use what little she has to make three last cakes, saying, "After this, only death will remain for us".

She carries trust to its utmost limits and there the superabundance of God is manifested for her. The flour will not be used up, the jar of oil will never run dry.

We, on the threshold of the Council of Youth, know how little flour our jars contain, how little we have. And in this little, the superabundance of God is offered, inexhaustibly.

Committed to an adventure on account of Christ, shall one day be able to tell him with confidence, "I believed you on your word, I regret nothing, if I had to begin all over again I would choose the same road".

Will we be women and men of this superabundance of Christ Jesus?

Roger, your brother

Commitment — involvement — life

I cannot see how involvement can be reduced to one possible option in life. To me it is as vital as life itself when you stop and see the death, the rottenness which is waiting for those who slip into the ways of present-society.

I found myself thrown into political struggle by the uncertainty of employment which I still experience while someone working in education.

I found myself thrown into a form of involvement in the Congo which gave me a lot : there, my position as development volunteer was full of privileges. But I was trapped, suffocating under the style of life adopted by the French people living there. And it was in the company of young Congolese workers — Poto Poto, Ouenzé, Mumba, Mongali, Balongo — that I encountered real living, real struggle. They gave me a share in their liveliness, their demands, all that made their combat so rich.

Often I find myself thinking about Peter's question "To whom could we go ?" Away from such struggles, what else could I do than slip into the deadly straight-jacket which is there, waiting to welcome us ?

It is essential to go towards a singleness of life. This does not mean that I spend every waking moment 'boiling political' in the sense of direct action, propaganda, party squabbles. But little by little all my life is called to conform.

Only eight pages in this *Letter from Taizé*, the last before the opening, because paper is in short supply in Europe.

Dare to Live, published by SPCK (New Seabury Press for U.S.A. / Cassell) offers a full introduction into the search-process begun with the announcement of the preparation of the Council of Youth at Easter 1970. This book exists in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Dutch.

e faithfully to the attitudes, the free and creative
 tionships corresponding to that form of society towards
 ch all my battling leads. In this respect, faith is the
 tant spur of love — sweeping aside bitterness, sullen
 er, negative reactions — a force creating, a joy calm
 grave — love, a poem striving to occupy my life...

s a fragment of an article due to appear in *Communion* n° 5 which will
 be published, on the theme of involvement. This review comes out four
 a year, in English, French, German, Italian. It completes the *Letter from*
 offering fuller reflections, or analyses of certain situations, always in
 rection of the preparation of the Council of Youth. In English, a specimen
 ed 'Struggle and contemplation to become men and women of communion'
 a selection of texts. One year's subscription is 15 francs, or 3.50 Dollars

ns of resurrection

Easter is the festival of life, the festival of Christ's
 g.

Yet I am marked by death, in so far as my relationships
 e others are foreordained, pre-determined. I am allow-
 o 'live', but under remote control from profit-based
 ety, only using the ready-laid paths of productivity and
 rest. My relationships with my colleague, my teacher,
 baker, my employer all bear the stamp of death. The
 e stamp burdens my relationship towards those living
 he shadow-zones of my country : immigrant workers,
 people, those who fail to 'fit in' socially or mentally...
 on a yet broader scale, in the innumerable, invisible
 ds between myself and the men, women, children of
 pillaged lands, the shanty-towns and dumping-grounds
 he whole world, there too death leaves its imprint.
 tionships of constraint and subjection. Wounded
 tionships. Relationships dead, or almost dead.

(continued on page 6)

THE OPENING OF T

The opening, in every continent, will be a celebration of the Resurrection — risen, alive, Christ goes on before us : it is he who will fling open the closed doors and bring his people from every servitude, bringing them out into a land of communion.

The opening will be a recapitulation of all the ground covered during four and a half years of preparation at the same time, a sharing turned future-wards, towards the years which the Council of Youth will cover. A sharing in which all will have their part : workers of the first hour and those of the eleventh hour.

The opening will seek to be the visible sign of communion in the whole people of God.

A communion where contemplation of the living Christ and the struggle of oppressed, voiceless mankind lie on the heart of the other.

A communion for which an Indian appealed at that moment when the Council of Youth was announced on Easter Day 1970. He said, "*When I turn my eyes to the world, I see men and nations greedy for power. Yet many years ago a man lived on earth who sought no power and united men. If it is love, the Church might constitute the last 'place of communion' for all mankind.*"

The openings which will follow one another across the continents of the world (their dates will be announced later), will in fact be one single opening spread out over a whole year.

COUNCIL OF YOUTH

In order to form links between those who live farthest from each other, and to find proper expression within the great diversity of people's situations, there will be several meetings. But they will be a single reality — an experience of world-wideness, universal beyond the limits of any regionalism, be it regional, national or continental, beyond frontiers created by the relationships of domination and subjection which exist between peoples.

The celebration of the opening at Taizé will begin on Friday August 30 at 7pm and will end on Sunday afternoon September 1 (registration form on back page).

Dates : either just for those days or, if the journey to Taizé is very long, continuing until the end of the week following. And all through the summer there will be international meetings at Taizé ; they start on the Monday evening of each week. But no meetings will be held from August 19 - 30, so as to leave these days free in which to make everything ready for the opening.

Accommodation : bring a tent. There is virtually no other solution, with no large dormitory tents available. Also bring sleeping-bags, blankets, air-mats, etc. It may be cold.

Costs : the Council of Youth will depend on being self-financing. So each person shares in the expenses involved according to their possibilities. One sum of money can have a quite different value in a rich country and in a poor one, and for these days you should think in terms of at least 10 - 15 french francs per day... for food, hiring of several circus-tents and the other considerable expenses...

A lot of people are already thinking of really concrete ways of coming up to the opening. Some will do it by a long period of silence. Others intend to arrive at Taizé on August 1 on foot, having walked for several days (or hours). The bus is on the main road 26 kilometers from Taizé : one would be to walk from there, alone or in small groups, taking the time to think about the Easter 1974 text published in the previous *Letter from Taizé*...

What can I do, caught in this complicated network of interests and powers? How does the risen Christ interact in my life? The risen Christ never imposes himself: he is to be discovered, not telling just how. In prayer, long behind times of hesitancy, awkwardness, dryness, the discovery of a small light which never stops shining.

From one sign of resurrection to another sign of resurrection: in my own family or among the neighbours amongst Carlos, Romualdo, Regina and all the Chilean refugees I am working with; amongst the members of my prayer-group, amongst friends, chance encounters...

The risen Christ invites us to create relationships, not of force but of freedom, not of self-interest but of love. He summons us to weave together with Him bonds that are more alive, more human. As I see it, the Council of Youth is something like that.

A fabric growing

The Council of Youth will be like a fabric growing. I write as a weaver from Finland, a fabric, of which I cannot foretell the final form, but which is gradually being woven all round us, without any model or clever design.

In this cloth, I can be a thread, a flash of colour... a crimson? Clear blue? Or the thread of grey linen. According to weavers, this 'third colour' is the most important one. The neutral grey of every day, the background for the deep crimson or the clear blue to sing against. The beauty of harmony.

Desiring only my own colour, and being glad at allowing it to bring joy, not rivalry. Why should I, being blue, be the enemy of green? Why should I be your adversary?

What of those who cannot or will not enter with us in the work? Supposing that I were to go on ahead of them, finding a way so that they can come freely, bearing their own colours to mix in the whole design? There is room for all. And every thread brings its own continuity, not only those which were stretched, in the beginning, from bar of the loom to the other; but every strand. If one thread breaks, the whole process halts at once and the joint hands of all the weavers come to tie it together again...

Every strand, even the brightest, may vanish, woven with the others, finished with. Yet, close at hand, it is there, even if our eyes cannot glimpse it... Now it is my thread's turn to hurtle through the meshes. Once its particular streak ceases to be visible, the whole harmony will become apparent, the harmony of my tone blending with the others, which accompany it until it vanishes...

I have no idea what will become of this fabric. Shall I know? Will one day see its completion?

Your face remains ever open, O Risen from the dead.

of the telegrammes received from young people in Portugal the day after the Coup d'Etat:

We hope blossoms, pray at Taizé for Portugal.

OPENING OF THE COUNCIL OF YOUTH AT TAIZÉ

(see pages 4 - 5)

Name :

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First Name :

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Address :

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(with zip-code and country)

Profession : Age :

Will come for the Opening of the Council of Youth
(30 August - 1 September)

Has already taken part in a meeting at Taizé :

Is bringing own tent :

Can be part of reflexion-groups in italian — german — french — english
spanish — portuguese — dutch — swedish.

Can undertake simultaneous translation from into

Need more registration forms / Information material.

Registration to be sent to : MEETINGS, 71460 - Taizé-Community, France

Please remember to write announcing your arrival! Then the work of welcoming and feeding you is much easier...

Letter n° 18

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